

VAJRASANAM

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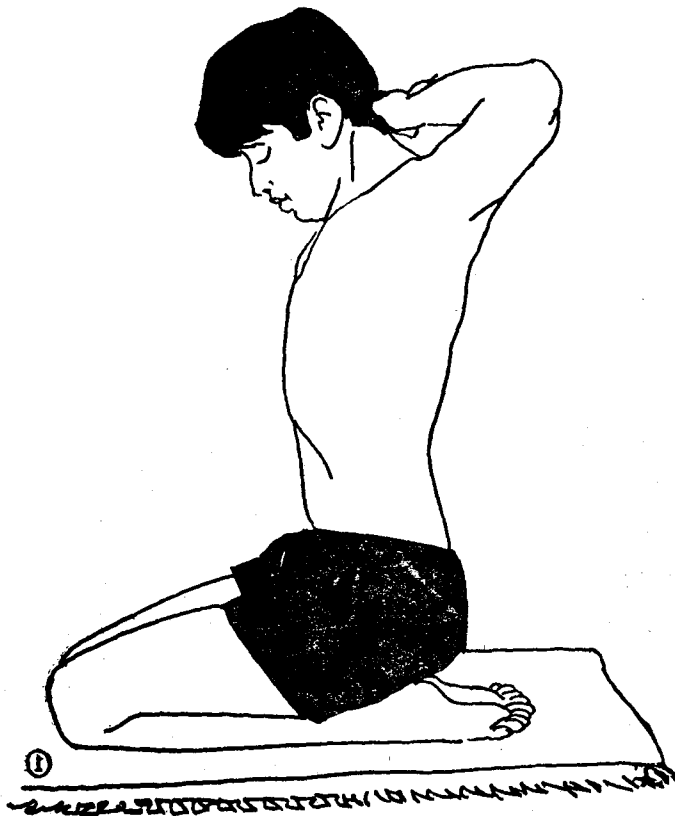
Of the many sitting postures, Vajrasanam is comparatively easy to do and combines grace and poise. It is a good posture for pranayama and

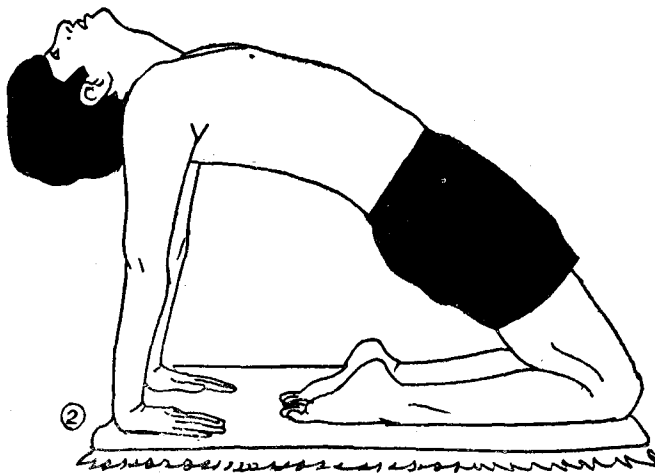
meditation and when performed with synchronous breathing and movements (vinyasas) it works on different joints and muscles and also

helps to relax them.

PROCEDURE

Use a thick carpet (1/8") folded into two; the seat should be neither too hard





nor too soft. Sit, bending the legs, with knees, shins and ankles together and stretched, toes pointing outward so that you sit on the heels with the shins on the ground. Keep the palms on the knees and straighten the back. Stretch the back of the neck and place the chin a couple of inches below the neck. Throw the shoulders a little back so that the shoulder blades tend to approximate each other forming a canal along the spinal column. This is Vajrasanam. (Refer to sketch 1 for the position of legs, spine and back).

The chin lock, Jalandhara-bandha, helps partially close the glottis and thus helps one control the breathing.

Now for the movements and variations (Vinyasas) of Vajrasanam. Interlock fingers of the two hands and turn them out. Inhaling raise the body and also the arms overhead. While you inhale, the chin lock will produce a hissing sound in the throat, due to the partial closing of the glottis. The period of inhalation and the movement of the trunk and the arms should synchronize. On completion of inhalation, you will be on the knees and the front portion of the legs. Stay for about 2 to 3 seconds, holding the breath in. Now as you exhale return to the original seated position.

Seated in Vajrasanam, raise the arms on inhalation. Stay

for a few seconds. On exhalation flex at the elbows, lowering the hands to the back of the neck (Refer to sketch 1 for arm position). Repeat 3 times.

The next Vinyasa will require, sitting on the heels, but bending forward, so that the face touches the ground and the arms still stretched outward. This movement which is to be done on exhalation, should be avoided by pregnant women.

COUNTERPOSE

Now for a counterpose for this forward movement. Exhale, slightly lean back and keep the palms on the ground about one foot behind the legs and apart by about a

12". Inhale, press the palms, the entire portion of the legs on the ground, the ankles and knees and raise the trunk, stretching the neck and throwing the head backward. (Refer Sketch 2). Inhale, return to the original position. Repeat about three times.

Persons who are not obese may do the above movement of raising the trunk on exhalation when it is called Brahmanakriya. Return to the original position on inhalation. Pregnant woman may do this movement. Persons with high B.P. need not drop the head back.

An advanced Vajrasanam variation would require the practitioner to spread the ankles about 18" and sit between the ankles and heels, and heels, instead of on them as earlier, when it is known as Virasanam. (Refer to Sketch 3).

BENEFITS

Vajrasanam is very relaxing. Because of the stretching on the ankles and the front portion of the knees, it gives good relief to people who are prone to be rheumatic and

suffer from gout. Asthmatics have been found to respond well especially to forward bending and backbeding. Pregnant women will find the trunk raising helps relieve the persistent low back pain and also strengthen the perineal muscles. It could be observed that the postures and movements are done with a breathing pattern. Breath is the connecting link between body and mind. With proper breathing in asanas, according to our Acharya's Paddhati, one gets a good mind-body coordination and control.

